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WEST GERMANY - USSR: During his meeting with Brezhnev at a Black Sea resort on 16-18 September, Chancellor Brandt will exploit the improving bilateral atmosphere to press for Soviet help on several questions of interest to Bonn.

Brandt will explore prospects for concluding bilateral trade, cultural, and commercial air agreements with the USSR. Bonn has expected that the four-power Berlin accord will lead Moscow to permit inclusion of a Berlin clause in the draft trade agreement, which has been pending since March. Negotiations on an air agreement have been intermittent for several years. Brandt would cite these agreements to domestic critics as an early proof of the fruitfulness of his Ostpolitik.

Brandt will also encourage Brezhnev to exert pressure on the East Germans to be forthcoming in the current inner-German talks. These "second phase" talks, designed to implement the four-power accord, got off to a poor start earlier this week when Pankow's negotiators reneged on the agreed German language text of the accord which had been worked out on 3 September. Brandt will remind the Soviets that Bonn is not prepared to ratify last year's German-Soviet treaty, or move decisively toward a Conference on European Security (CES) or Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR) talks until the inner-German arrangements are completed. At the same time, however, some German officials are concerned that Soviet leaders may now exert a "reverse leverage"--no progress on inner-German talks until Bonn shows some initiative on CES or MBFR--or demand parallel progress.

Domestic reaction to the announcement of the visit has been mixed. Brandt will certainly hope that any fruits of the visit will enhance the government's popularity and keep the opposition Christian Democrats, critical and suspicious of Ostpolitik, on the defensive. Most critics have complained that Brandt is toadying to Moscow and that the government failed to brief thoroughly its important Western Allies regarding Brandt's plans.

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NOTES

FINLAND-GERMANY: The four-power agreement on Berlin, though not yet consummated, may already have encouraged some West European states to rethink their positions on recognizing East Germany. The Finns have indicated that President Kekkonen will announce in a speech today "a proposal" concerning recognition of both German states. Although the Finns are particularly sensitive to Soviet wishes and are anxious to host a Conference on European Security, any precipitous action by Helsinki would have its effect on other Nordic and neutral states. Any important Finnish move, moreover, would place pressure on the Brandt government to reach a rapid accommodation with East Germany, enhance the credibility of the domestic opponents of Brandt's Ost-politik, and thus increase the vulnerability of the Social Democratic - Free Democratic government.

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SYRIA:

Asad is uncertain of his hold on the government and even of his position with the army, a necessary prop for any regime in Damascus. The president suspects that Baathists in Iraq and Lebanon who oppose his government might attempt a coup with the aid of the Iraqi Government. this opposition is preventing Asad from retreating from his tough stand against Jordan--in the absence of any agreement between King Husayn and the fedayeen--and from continuing the more moderate policies which he favors with regard to the Arab-Israeli situation.

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